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Approved For Release 2001/07/28 : CIA-RDP78-03061A000100030015-3

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10 April 1961

Briefly Noted

East German Denounces Nasser Regime

The East German leading Communist daily, Neues Deutschland, reports that on 23 December 1960, at a meeting of the 11th plenum of the East German Communist Party (SED) attended by the East German Politburo member, Hermann Matem, Matem saw fit to quote a Brazilian Communist delegate who maintained that Cuba was a prototype of a national democratic state which has already fulfilled the tasks of democratic revolution and national liberation. On the other hand, he asserted, while the UAR (to be sure) has gained its national political independence from French and British "imperialism," it is economically linked with US capital and West German "imperialism" and is autocratically ruled by the Nasser government against the democratic forces of the Egyptian and Syrian population.

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Background: South Africa will become a republic on 31 May 1961. It had originally applied for membership in the Commonwealth but, on 15 March, during the annual meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers, withdrew the application contending that its apartheid policy was purely an internal matter. Due to Verwoerd's withdrawal of South Africa's application, there was no voting. Even Archbishop Makarios, who as a new applicant for membership might have been expected to remain aloof from the debate, said at Cyprus, before he left for Lancaster House in London to attend the meeting, that he did not know whether or nor South Africa should continue to be accepted as a member but that, nevertheless, "apartheid is to be condemned." Others in London were less discreet. Tunku Abdul Rahman of Malaya led the attack. He unleashed a 14-page indictment of South Africa's racial policies, demanding a change. A white member, Diefenbaker of Canada, joined in, followed by Jawaharlal Nehru of India. After Dr. Verwoerd had spoken at some length, outlining the whys and wherefores of apartheid, each Prime Minister presented his position on the subject to the meeting, some speaking several times. None defended Dr. Verwoerd's position. Prime Minister Macmillan of Great Britain had previously worked tirelessly to prevent this Commonwealth conflict from breaking open - had indeed tried to isolate the apartheid issue from the membership issue. Toward the end of the meetings on this subject, however, in summing up, he pointed out that if South Africa's membership was continued, without taking into consideration its racial policy, a misleading impression might be given to the world: it might imply Commonwealth sanction for apartheid. Afterwards, the clearest statement of non-white South African reaction was perhaps that given by Albert John Luthuli, head of the banned African National Congress: "I am happy at the outcome and I think I speak for my people. The Commonwealth has stood for principle." Luthuli added that his group was not opposed to reapplication by the same government - if it should agree to change its racial policy.

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Background: At the fall, 1960, UN General Assembly, Minister of State David Ormsby-Gore cited the plight of "the world's three newest colonies -- Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia." These countries, under Russian tsarist imperialism from the 18th Century on emerged as sovereign states in 1918, and later became members of the League of Nations.

Under the terms of the secret protocol of the Molotov - Ribbentrop treaty of 23 August 1939 and the Nazi-Soviet agreement to partition Poland 28 September 1939, the Baltic states were assigned to the USSR sphere of influence. Although they had signed non-aggression pacts with Moscow, these states were invaded in June 1940 and "admitted" to the USSR two months later. Since their annexation, almost 400,000 Balts have been deported to remote regions of the Soviet Union; over 300,000 have fled to the free world. Those remaining have suffered loss of political rights, economic exploitation, cultural oppression and Russification. Concurrently, Soviet policy has directed a steady influx of Russian colonists into Baltic urban and industrial areas to fill key positions in government and industry. Party and government officials of Baltic origin were appointed only after extensive periods of training in Moscow.


The US has always refused to recognize the incorporation of the Baltic States in the USSR, and there is vigorous exile support for the Baltic cause. In the fall of 1960, the UN General Assembly debate on colonialism produced a series of attacks on the Soviet brand of colonialism, especially as manifested in the Baltic States. During these debates, an Estonian sailor, Viktor Jaanimets, made a dramatic escape from the Soviet ship Baltika which had brought Khrushchev to New York. In September 1960, a Lithuanian woman, Julia Lungys, defected to the West in Rome. In October, a Latvian photographer, Janis Mazulans gained asylum in Stockholm. In January 1961, a letter from Estonia denouncing Soviet colonialism was printed by two important West German dailies and this was subsequently reprinted elsewhere. (See Press Comments dated 23 March 1961.)

On ethnic grounds alone, the differences between the Balts and the Russians would be enough to explain Baltic opposition to their position in the Soviet empire. The Baltic languages are completely foreign to Russian or any other Slavic tongue. The Balts have their own cultures and traditions, and have a strong spirit of independence.

A continuing flow of evidence indicates the nature and intensity of the opposition of the Baltic people to Soviet colonial policies. It is anti-Communist, anti-Russian, and nationalist. In November 1958, Latvians in Riga manifested their nationalism by singing their national anthem and raising their old national flag at a public gathering at a cemetery, in the face of government prohibition of such activities. Elements of the Latvian CP were denounced in 1959 and 1960 for their "bourgeois nationalist" deviations. Similar party purges occurred, on a smaller scale, in the Estonian and Lithuanian CP's. A public demonstration of Estonian nationalism occurred in Tartu in 1958. Last summer, a series of song festivals promoted by the regime to commemorate Baltic incorporation into the USSR were used by the Balts to express their nationalist feelings. A strike by Latvian workers occurred in June 1960. Many Baltic writers in all three countries openly oppose Soviet colonialism, and refuse to

write anything at all. As recently as February 1961, they were being attacked for their "conspiracy of silence".

The youth in the Baltic countries are among the most nationalistic and difficult-to-control elements. A government campaign to induce young people to migrate to the Virgin Lands produced widespread attempts by the Baltic youth and their families to manufacture excuses to keep them in their homelands. The offenders were accused of "bourgeois nationalism" in the press. There were expressions of sympathy for the Hungarian revolution at Baltic universities in 1956. The University of Vilnius appears to be a center of anti-Communist sentiment, and Lithuanian students have demonstrated against the Soviet occupation. Many Baltic students make a habit of evading the political lectures in their curriculum. The spreading of anti-Russian and anti-Soviet jokes is commonplace, and many Balts refuse to speak the Russian language.



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372. Disillusionment in Cuba

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Background: Although the Castro government, overtly and covertly, continues to try to export its revolution and capitalize on the impact it initially made, especially among impressionable youth in Latin America, evidence is mounting that conditions in Cuba are growing increasingly intolerable for the Cuban people. Moreover, despite the controls on information, reports of the growing reaction against these conditions cannot be kept from the world press. Newspaper accounts of acts of sabotage and organized resistance to the regime are appearing frequently in the world news services and in the accounts of individual reporters. (See the New York Herald Tribune series, referred to in connection with Item #368, Bi-Weekly Propaganda Guidance Issue #62.) Accounts of attempted sabotage of industrial and agricultural installations are becoming commonplace. Anti-Castro activists are exploding bombs daily in Havana - twelve in a single day, according to one recent account. Government forces are deployed against four groups of armed opponents of the regime in eastern Oriente Province, and other armed anti-Castro fighters are said to be active in Pinar del Rio and Las Villas provinces. During the Easter holidays, the government felt obliged to arrest scores from among the thousands of participants in a religious procession, and three hundred naval officers and men openly rebelled against the regime, with the entire complement of personnel at one sub-base setting out to sea in a confiscated naval craft.

In addition to repression of personal liberty, totalitarian controls, political imprisonment, and the complete disintegration of the Cuban system of justice, serious economic problems are the basis of much of the mounting realization within Cuba that the Castro revolution has not only betrayed its original ideals but that its economic program actually has not solved the problems of poverty and chronic unemployment. Estimates are that the mainstay of Cuba's economy, the sugar crop, will fall well below the 5,500,000 to 6,000,000 tons predicted for 1961. In other words, it will be well below the level needed to provide an underpinning for the economy in general, and the promised new development that was supposed to produce the necessary new jobs. The government, in fact, has found it necessary to impose wage cuts on sugar mill workers. The workers, in turn, have responded with deliberate slow-down tactics. This provides an interesting example of disenchantment with Castro on the part of the lower classes from which he drew much of his original strength. Another important aspect of the economic situation, and one which Castro's propaganda has attempted to conceal, is the fact that Cuban businessmen, large and small, have had their property expropriated by the government, which not only has driven them to oppose the regime but has resulted in serious economic dislocation as the government managers have bungled the supervision of these enterprises. Castro propaganda, particularly for export to Latin America, has made it appear that only "Yankee imperialists" have had their business and investments seized. Actually, nearly all Cuban private business has been confiscated. Affected are not only large enterprises in the sugar, rum, tobacco and other businesses, but the owners of the corner grocery store, who

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have been driven from business by "people's stores", all department store proprietors, all the small poultry and egg producers, and, of course, the related private service enterprises and professions. A series of governmental edicts, beginning in August 1960, brought about the confiscation of Cuban private property. In August, 307 private transportation enterprises were taken over by the government and amalgamated into a single government agency. All commercial banks were nationalized. In October 1960, nearly 400 commercial enterprises, large and small, in a variety of fields, were taken over by the government. Also in October 1960, all private rental property in Cuba was seized by the government. The process of expropriation, or "intervention" by the government has been so extensive, that, beginning in January 1961, special courses to train "intervenors" were set up. Three thousand persons attended the first course.



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Background: Recent statements by Cardinal Wyszynski, Catholic Primate of Poland, indicate that the Polish church is taking a firm public position but continuing to avoid public statements which would lead to an outright break with the regime. As early as 12 January 1961, in an episcopal letter to the 15,000 Polish clerics, the Primate exhorted his clergy to defend the church's rights at all "reasonable costs, even... punishment, expulsion or loss of personal liberty.... There can be no husbanding of strength and sacrifices." Further, he urged clerical unity in the "extremely difficult" situation. He condemned the "painful evidence of apostasy" among priests who had joined the Polish National Catholic Church, warned against "patriotic" and "progressive" priests' movements and ordered clerics not to accept financial aid from regime-sponsored groups or become involved in politics. He warned his clergy to be "ready for the worse" and to sustain at all costs the link between themselves and the faithful. In contrast to the 1957 elections, when Gomulka needed support against strong party factions, the church has not been asked to support the regime's slate in the current election campaign. On 18 March 1961, (the same day Gomulka officially opened the campaign for parliamentary and local elections), Cardinal Wyszynski implied that Polish Catholics would form an underground church if necessary to preserve their spiritual integrity. He said that Catholics know "what it meant to wear chains" as well as "what it meant to throw them off." Meanwhile, Gomulka (apparently unaware of the Cardinal's speech), in his own address, said that the main source of trouble between church and state arose from the fact that "the souls of the church leaders belong to the Vatican.... which has adopted a hostile attitude toward the Polish People's State.... To further its nefarious aims, the Vatican needs the martyrdom of the Catholic Church especially in Poland; however, in Poland such persecutions do not exist." On the following day (19 March), Wyszynski rebutted Gomulka's assertions in detail and reviewed the evidence of the regime's anti-religious campaign. He named 20 state-supported organizations devoted to anti-Catholic activities and flatly denied Gomulka's charge that the Vatican was running the church of Poland. Furthermore, he defied the regime to take retaliatory measures against him, implying that any "hostile actions" on the part of the church were his own since as Primate he alone was responsible for church policies in Poland. Speaking from the pulpit of the Church of the Visitation in midtown Warsaw, the Polish Primate charged that the real issue in Poland was the government's drive to separate the Polish people from their historic faith. "It is only necessary to ask what better serves the church, what better serves the dignity of man - to act like a serf who renounced his freedom, his reason, his will, and becomes a groveling syncopant or to stand upright with head held high, professing the truth and defending one's dignity. The Polish Cardinal ended his sermon on the following note: "I tell you, you will serve only your God because man is too noble to serve anyone but God. Man was created not just to be a consuming animal; man is called to something higher."

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